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COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ABF-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 SSO-00 INRE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 DRC-01 /088 W
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O R 171305Z JUN 74
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2115
INFO USMISSION USUN NY
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 NEW DELHI 8019

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SPOP, IN
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF INDIAN FAMILY PLANNING POLICY

REF: A. STATE 112325 B. NEW DELHI 7230

SUMMARY: INDIAN POPULATION GROWTH IS ALREADY A CRUSHING BURDEN ON THE SHAKY INDIAN ECONOMY AND WILL INEXORABLY FORCE EVER-INCREASING SOCIAL OVERHEAD EXPENDITURES IF INDIA IS TO MAINTAIN EVEN ITS PRESENT LOW LIVING STANDARDS. PRESENT OR PLANNED GOI FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS DO NOT SEEM CAPABLE OF REDUCING THE BIRTHRATE MUCH BELOW THE CURRENT LEVEL. WHILE FASTER ECONOMIC GROWTH MAY BE A PREREQUISITE FOR SUCCESSFUL POPULATION CONTROL, INDIA'S POPULATION GROWTH INHIBITS THE SUSTAINED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD PERMIT THE BIRTHRATE TO FALL. TO BREAK THIS VICIOUS CIRCLE, THE GOI SHOULD DO MORE TO STRESS A VARIETY OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES. SINCE THE INDIANS DO NOT WELCOME EXTERNAL FAMILY PLANNING ASSISTANCE FROM THE U.S. OR OTHER BILATERAL DONORS, WE SUGGEST THAT ALL U.S. ASSISTANCE IN THE FUTURE BE CHANNELED THROUGH
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AGENCIES SUCH AS THE U.N. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE STARK FACT IS THAT A QUARTER CENTURY AFTER INDIA PIONEERED FAMILY PLANNING AMONG LDC'S, EACH NEW MOON SEES A MILLION NEW INDIANS AND INDIA'S POPULATION WILL PROBABLY CROSS THE 600 MILLION MARK THIS YEAR. PERHAPS NEXT MONTH. IT ISN'T SO MUCH THAT INDIA'S POPULATION GROWTH RATE IS ALL THAT HIGH. SEVERAL COUNTRIES HAVE RATES HIGHER THAN ITS 2.2-2.3 PERCENT ANNUALLY. IT IS MAINLY THAT THE BASE IS SO LARGE. THERE SEEMS NO WAY OF TURNING OFF THE FAUCET THIS SIDE OF 1 BILLION INDIANS, WHICH MEANS INDIA MUST CONTINUE TO COURT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISASTER. IT IS NOT CLEAR HOW THE SHAKY AND SLOW-GROWING INDIAN ECONOMY CAN BEAR THE ENORMOUS EXPENDITURES ON HEALTH, HOUSING, EMPLOYMENT, AND EDUCATION, WHICH MUST BE MADE IF THE SOCIETY IS EVEN TO MAINTAIN ITS CURRENT LOW LEVELS. THE OPTIONS OPEN TO INDIA DIMINISH AS POPULATION OUTSTRIPS AVAILABLE RESOURCES IN BAD AGRICULTURAL YEARS AND LIVING STANDARDS BARELY MOVE AHEAD IN GOOD ONES.

2. THE GOI FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM HAS RUN INTO DEEP TROUBLE, AS THE ENCOURAGING MOMENTUM BUILT UP DURING THE LATE SIXTIES HAS BEEN DISSIPATED. WHILE NO ONE KNOWS INDIA'S BIRTHRATE FOR SURE, SAMPLE SURVEYS INDICATE THAT IT HAS DECLINED ONLY FROM 38 TO 36 PER THOUSAND THE LAST FOUR YEARS. THE INITIAL SUCCESS OF THE IUCD AND MASS VASECTOMY CAMPS HAS BEEN NEGATED BY SOME BAD EXPERIENCES AND THE GOI'S DOUBTS AND SCRUPLES ABOUT THE PROGRAMS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE NUMBER OF VASECTOMIES DECLINED FROM 3 MILLION TO 900,000 BETWEEN 1972 AND 1973, PARTLY BECAUSE THE GOI ELIMINATED A RS. 100 BONUS TO VASECTOMY ACCEPTORS. AMBIVALENCE AND SCEPTICISM TOWARD POPULATION CONTROL AT THE TOP LEVELS OF THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT, THE OFTEN MEDIOCRE QUALITY OF MANY FAMILY PLANNING OFFICIALS, AND INCOMPETENT LOWER-LEVEL MANAGEMENT HAVE FURTHER HINDERED EFFORTS AT POPULATION CONTROL. BY GIVING TAX, LAND, AND WELFARE ADVANTAGES TO LARGE FAMILIES, THE GOI IS EFFECTIVELY PRO-NATALIST AND HELPS DEFEAT ITS FAMILY PLANNING GOALS.
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3. THE GOI DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY PLANNING, INCREASINGLY INFLUENCED BY THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, IS NOW AGAIN EMPHASIZING AN EVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TOWARD REDUCING BIRTHS RATHER THAN PRIMARILY FOCUSING ON MORE IMMEDIATE BIRTH PREVENTION. THE GOI IS PLANNING AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM INVOLVING THE TOTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF THE RURAL POPULATION IN THE HOPES THAT THIS WILL REDUCE THE

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PRESSURES INDUCING LARGE FAMILIES (REF B), WHILE
THIS STRATEGY WILL HELP RURAL FAMILIES TO HAVE THE
NUMBER OF SURVIVING CHILDREN THEY DESIRE, IT WILL
NOT BY ITSELF FUNDAMENTALLY ALTER FERTILITY BEHAVIOR.
MEANWHILE, DIRECT AND POSSIBLY MORE EFFECTIVE MEASURES
SUCH AS A SEARCH FOR CONTRACEPTION SUITABLE TO
INDIANS (INCLUDING TUAL CONTRACEPTION IN URBAN AREAS)
AND ABORTION ARE NEGLECTED BY THE GOI, ALTHOUGH THE
ESTIMATED 5 MILLION ABORTIONS A YEAR IN INDIA INDICATE
A GROWING ACCEPTANCE OF THIS METHOD BY INDIANS.

4. RURAL POVERTY IN INDIA IS A MAJOR BAR TO ACCEPTANCE
OF MODERN FAMILY PLANNING, AS FARMERS NEED MANY
CHILDERN TO PROVIDE NECESSARY LABOR AND TO PROVIDE
SOCIAL SECURITY. NUMEROUS INDIAN STUDIES SUGGEST
ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACEPTION FOLLOWS RISING PER CAPITA
INCOMES, FEMALE LITERACY, AND ASSIMILATION OF THE
RECENTLY URBANIZED. ONE OF INDIA'S PROBLEMS IS THAT
IT IS CAUGHT IN A VICIOUS CIRCLE WHERE THE RATE
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS BADLY HINDERED BY
POPULATION GROWTH. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES,
STRONGER POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE INCENTIVES ARE NEEDED.
ONE PROBLEM IS THAT SOME FORMER CHECKS ON POPULATION
GROWTH IN RURAL INDIAN SOCIETY HAVE BEEN DISCARDED
BEFORE MODERN CONTRACEPTIVE TECHNIQUES HAVE BEEN
ADOPTED. FOR EXAMPLE, THE ABANDONMENT OF FEMALE
INFANTICIDE, PROHIBITION OF WIDOWS REMARRYING AND
TIGHT FAMILY CONTROLS ON YOUNG FEMALES, HAVE
CONTRIBUTED TO THE ACCELERATION OF INDIAN RURAL
POPULATION GROWTH IN THE LAST 100 YEARS.

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USIE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 PA-04 PRS-01 AGR-20 SWF-02

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5. IT CONTINUES TO BE DIFFICULT FOR INDIAN AGRICULTURE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE GROWING POPULATION. INDIA WILL HAVE TO IMPORT 2.5 MILLION TONS OF FOODGRAINS THIS YEAR, MAINLY FROM THE U.S., JUST TO MAINTAIN PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION, EVEN IF THE MONSOON IS GOOD. THE SHORTFALL IN DOMESTIC FERTILIZER PRODUCTION NECESSITATES LARGE IMPORTS OF INCREASINGLY COSTLY FERTILIZER. MASSIVE US WHEAT SALES ON CONCESSIONAL TERMS DURING THE SIXTIES, WHICH WERE MAINLY USED FOR SUBSIDIZED SLAES TO URBAN POPULATIONS, ENABLED INDIVIDUALS TO PASS ALONG THE COSTS OF LARGE FAMILIES TO THE GOI AND MAY ACTUALLY HAVE WEAKENED THE GOI FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM BY ENCOURAGING IMPROVIDENT BREEDING. THE RECENT DECLINE IN WORLD FOOD RESERVES AND THE SHARP REDUCTION OF U.S. CONCESSIONAL FOOD SALES WORLDWIDE MEANS THAT INDIA CAN NO LONGER RELY ON MASSIVE OVERSEAS ASSISTANCE DURING TIMES OF SHORTAGE. A FUTURE FAILURE OF THE INDIAN FOOD CROP COULD CAUSE WIDESPREAD DEATH AND SUFFERING WHICH COULD NOT BE OVERCOME BY THE GOI
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OR FOREIGN ASSISTANCE. THE RISE IN THE DEATH RATE IN SEVERAL RURAL AREAS SUGGESTS THAT MALTHUSIAN PRESSURES ARE ALREADY BEING FELT.

6. INCREASING POLITICAL DISTURBANCES SHOULD BE EXPECTED IN THE FUTURE, FED BY THE PRESSURES OF RISING POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS, FOOD SHORTAGES, AND GROWING SCARCITIES IN HOUSEHOLD COMMODITIES. THE GOI HAS NOT BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN ALLEVIATING UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE CITIES. THE RECENT DISTURBANCES IN GUJARAT AND BIHAR SEEM TO BE ONLY THE BEGINNING OF CHRONIC AND SERIOUS POLITICAL DISORDERS OCCURING THROUGHOUT INDIA.

7. THE GLOOMY PICUTRE WE HAVE PAINTED IS UNAVOIDABLE UNLESS THE INDIAS -- GOVERNMENT AND MAN IN THE VILLAGE ALIKE -- BEGIN THINKING ABOUT FERTILITY IN A VERY DIFFERENT WAY. BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES AND IMPROVED

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HEALTH CARE BY THEMSLELES MAY NOT HAVE SIGNIFICANT
EFFECT IN CONTROLLING POPULATION UNTIL A LARGE FAMILY
IS SEEN AS A LIABLIITY RATHER THAN AN ASSET. IN THE
MEANTIME. WHILE CONTINUED ECONOMIC GROWTH AND TIME IS
THE SURE WAY TO LOWER THE BIRTHRATE SIGNIFICANTLY,
INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH IS SO HAMPERED BY ITS ALREADY
HUGE POPULATION THAT ADDITIONAL POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE
INCENTIVES TO INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES ARE NEEDED.OTHERWISE
INDIA MAY RUN OUT OF TRACK WITHOUT EVER ACHIEVING THE
SUSTAINED GROWTH THAT LEADS TO A LOWER BIRTHRATE. THE
DEMONSTRATED EFFECTIVENESS OF CASH INCENTIVES FOR
STERILIZATION SHOWS THAT MORE COULD BE DONE BY USING
FINANCIAL REWARDS TO ALTER FERTILITY BEHAVIOR, GIVEN
EFFICIENT ADMINISTRATION OF THE SYSTEM GRADUATED
GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS AIMED AT DELAYING THE AGE OF FEMALE
MARRIAGES, SAVINGS CERTIFICATES RELATED TO INCREASING
THE INTERVAL BETWEEN BIRTHS, AND COMMUNITY INCENTIVES
WHICH ARE CONTEMPLATED IN THE FIFTH PLAN ARE OBVIOUS
POSSIBILITIES. NEGATIVE ECONOMIC INCENTIVES TO LARGE
FAMILIES AND MORE VIGOROUS PROMOTION BY THE GOI OF
THE MEDICAL TERMINATION OF PREGNANCY ACT WOULD ALSO
HELP. BUT THE INDIANS MUST WORK THIS OUT FOR THEMSELVES:
TOP INDIAN OFFICIALS HAVE MADE IT ABUDANTLY
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CLEAR THAT THE GOI CONSIDERS MOST EXTERNAL FAMILY
PLANNING ASSISTANCE OF MARGINAL VALUE OR USELESS, AND

THAT INDIA WILL RUN FAMILY PLANNING IN ITS OWN WAY
WITHOUT FOREIGN ADVICE.

8. USG BILATERAL ASSISTANCE IN MOST AREAS RELATED TO
FAMILY PLANNING WILL NOT HAVE MUCH EFFECT. THE GOI
WOULD NOT ACCEPT US INVOLVEMENT IN DIRECT METHODS
OF CONTROLLING BIRTHS. JOINT RESEARCH PROGRAMS IN
REPORDUCTIVE BIOLOGY AND PHYSIOLOGY ARE ACCEPTABLE, AND
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY PLANNING HAS ALREADY
SUGGESTED SUCH PROGRAMS TO THE US DEPARTMENT OF HEW.
PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS MAY BE MORE USEFUL IN SUPPORTING
INCENTIVE EXPERIMENTS, HELPING TO EXPAND THE MARKETING
AND SALE OF CONDOMS AND OTHER CONTRACEPTIVES, AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGALIZED ABORTIONS.

9. MULTILATERAL AID TO INDIAN FAMILY PLANNING,
WHICH UP TO NOW HAS BEEN UNCOORDINATED AND INEFFECTIVE,
IS NEVERTHELESS THE ONLY POLITICALLY ACCEPTABLE FORMAT
FOR SUPPORTING OPERATIONAL POPULATION CONTROL ACTIVITIES.
THE UNFPA HAS ANNOUNCED A 5-YEAR $40 MILLION PROGRAM
IN SUPPORT OF GOI FIFTH PLAN ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING
PRIORITY SUPPORT FOR STERILIZATION AND ABORTION PROGRAMS.

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SINCE THE US PAYS A SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF THE UNFPA BUDGET, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ENCOURGAE MORE EFFECTIVE USE OF THE UN FUNDS SPENT IN INDIA.

10. WE SHOULD BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT THE INTERNATIONAL FAMILY PLANNING COMMUNITY WILL BE OF MUCH HELP IN CHANGING INDIAN ATTITUDES OR PROGRAMS. ADDITIONAL SECRETARY CHANDRASEKHAR, PROBABLY THE MOST INFLUENTIAL GOI OFFICIAL IN THE FIELD OF FAMILY PLANNING, HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT THE GOI WILL SUPPORT A LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR APPROACH AT THE UPCOMING WORLD POPULATION CONFERENCE IN BUCHAREST, WHICH DOES NOT INFRINGE UPON NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY. SINCE THE INDIANS SEE FAMILY PLANNING MAINLY AS PART OF OVERALL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THEY WILL NOT SUPPORT US EFFORTS TO NARROWLY DEFINE THE ISSUES AT THE BUCHAREST MEETING.
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WE DOUBT THAT INDIAN ATTITUDES WILL BE CHANGED BY THE CONFERENCE OR BY ANY OTHER INTERNATIONAL FORUM, BUT WE SHOULD TACTFULLY CONTINUE OUR EFFORTS TO INFLUENCE INDIAN POLICY TOWARD MORE PRODUCTIVE CHANNELS.
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